



1. Statement of purpose

In the past, the California Department of Transportation (Department) was an international leader in transportation system development. Its freeways, highways, and other transportation systems were models that were emulated around the world. Partially because of limited involvement in national forums, the Department's position as an expert organization has diminished in the last two decades. In an environment of increasing international competition for economic development and jobs coupled with an increased demand for improved mobility and environmental quality, the Department must participate in national forums to ensure that its actions maximize benefit to California's transportation system. Therefore, it is essential that the Department reestablish its role as a national leader in transportation policy, research and technical expertise.

However, funding for transportation is a scarce commodity that must be used judiciously and the cost of participating at the national level can be high. Therefore, the Department must strategically engage on a national level. To accomplish this objective, the Department shall invest its resources in national organizations for the purpose of obtaining the maximum return on investment to further California's transportation system as a key component of the state and national economy.

2. Focus on Strategic Goals

The Department shall invest its resources in those key technical, policy, and research committees and organizations that further its ability to meet its strategic goals as described in the Program-Level Action Plan (PLAP):

- *Safety*: Provide the safest transportation system in the nation for users and workers.
- *Flexibility*: Provide mobility choices through strategic partnerships.
- *Reliability*: Provide dependable travel times.
- *Performance*: Optimize transportation system throughput.
- *Stewardship*: Preserve and enhance California's resources and investments.
- *Delivery*: Improve delivery of products and services.

The Department shall actively participate in those national legislative, policy, research, and technical organizations that have the most influence on the development of transportation infrastructure and systems for the purposes of representing the state's interests and to obtain the maximum return to the state in terms of dollars and policy decisions.



The Department will work to foster peer-to-peer relationships with its colleagues from other states and organizations by assigning staff participants at functional and management levels that are commensurate with the membership of the forum, committee or subcommittee with which it is participating.

Staff selected to participate in national forums shall seek seats, and where appropriate, committee leadership roles on those various committees, subcommittees, task forces, and focus groups in an effort to direct national focus and policy to areas of particular interest to California, as well as to its local and regional partners. In areas where direct participation is not possible, staff shall work closely with representatives from other states and organizations to ensure that California's needs are communicated and considered.

3. Cost-effectiveness

Divisions and districts shall minimize and defray costs for travel, participation, and communication without compromising the state's ability to communicate its message through actions such as:

- Limiting the number of participants to the least amount necessary at any single event.
- Encouraging the use of electronic communications where deemed to be an effective alternative.
- Seeking cooperative arrangements with sponsoring agencies for travel expenses.
- Hosting meetings in state where it is cost effective to do so.

In the event that a sponsoring agency has invited a Department employee to participate in a function and there will be no travel expense to the State, the Department will compensate the employee for his or her time under normal work rules. This shall apply when the reason for the invitation is a result of the employee's responsibility within the Department, or is related to his or her transportation expertise outside of his or her direct responsibility area and is generally reflective of the Department's goals. Examples of such instances include:

- Presenting papers,
- Participating in nationally recognized panels,
- Providing expert testimony,
- Receiving a nationally recognized award for an individual action that is germane to the function of the Department, and/or
- Some other purpose that is recognized by the employee's Headquarters Deputy or District Director as having a benefit to his or her professional standing and reflects positively on the functions of the Department.



4. Communication

Upon their return, participants in national forums shall report on, and share information, benefits obtained and action items to follow as a result of their participation. Communication should occur at the appropriate levels both internal and external to the Department. Participants will distribute information in a timely manner, using standardized reporting formats either in person, electronically, or by written report in a way that is both relatively undemanding for the contributor and readily accessible by others who will benefit by its availability. In addition, as determined by their immediate supervisor, participants will be periodically required to provide an update on the continuing benefit of their activity.

Participants shall be responsible for identifying and subsequently alerting appropriate members of the Department and Administration to issues and actions that may affect the provision of transportation services and facilities in California.

5. Measurement of Results

Where appropriate, divisions and districts shall quantitatively measure and report on the impact of their participation on a national level in terms of the goals, objectives, and metrics identified in the PLAP.

In addition, at the end of a year, District Directors and Deputy Directors will review and report to the Director on the effectiveness of this plan in achieving its purpose.

6. Staff Development and Support

Division chiefs shall clearly communicate to staff the importance of their national involvement, the Department's expectations for their participation, and their responsibilities to meet the objectives of this plan.

Division chiefs shall provide staff with the training and opportunity to develop the technical expertise, leadership, and communication skills to effectively participate at the national level consistent with the Department's budget.

Recognizing the opportunity for the professional development of staff that exists within the context of this plan, deputies and division chiefs shall provide management support and encouragement for national participation that yields recognition to, and/or increases productivity for, the Department.



7. National Forums of Interest

There are numerous organizations that are actively involved in improving transportation on a national level. District directors, deputy directors and division chiefs shall participate in forums or select staff for panel, committee, or subcommittee assignments in accordance with the strategic engagement policies described above. The Department is already involved in participating in several national organizations, some of which listed below:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials,
- American Public Transit Association,
- American Society of Civil Engineers,
- Institute of Transportation Engineers,
- National Association of State Aviation Officials,
- National Cooperative Highway Research Program,
- Numerous technical advisory panels directly related to construction materials, techniques and delivery processes,
- Transportation Research Board,
- Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and
- Western States Corridor Coalition.

In addition to the abovementioned groups, the Department actively engages with federal agencies such as the United States Department of Transportation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency in the course of delivering its programs as well as at their request to participate on panels and task forces targeted towards improving mobility.

As new issues are identified, states, professional associations, or other interested individuals may come together to either advocate for, or find solutions and alternatives to address the situation at hand. It will be incumbent upon the Department to focus its participation in such organizations to the extent that it meets the policies and objectives described above.

8. Actions to be Taken

This plan will be translated into action by issuing Director's Policy and a series of Deputy Directives. The policy would establish the Department's intention to ensure that it is focusing its investment in national engagement in a strategic manner and that it expects tangible benefits to result from the outcome of its investment. The Deputy Directives would implement the policy by requiring all staff submitting and reviewing requests to engage nationally to do the following:

1. Ensure that the request is consistent with the PLAP as it applies to their District or Division.



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2. Require that the participant report on the substance of his or her participation upon return and follow up with subsequent reports as appropriate.
3. Require that the Division from which the participation has been initiated to measure the effect of the participation through their PLAP.

My final approval would be based on evaluation of the merit of the request, including a review of the relationship of the participation to the Department's overall objectives and the PLAP.